



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
17 JANUARY 1968

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2. South Vietnam

All strikes are to be called off for the time being. This respite is the product of a bargaining session between the government and union leaders Monday night. The government agreed to give electrical workers a retroactive cost-of-living allowance in exchange for the temporary back-to-work order from the union.

The no-strike pledge is good only through Tet, however, and problems could develop unless the government moves toward a more permanent accommodation--including release of jailed union leaders.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Reaction to the War:

[redacted] in groups the Vietnamese continually voice their pride in their nation, in its history of resisting aggression, and in the fact that it is now "defeating" the most powerful nation on earth. Workers, however, have tended to become corrupted by the war and are engaging in petty theft and black marketeering. Primary effort is given to keeping safe and alive. [redacted] American leaflets on how to build small bomb shelters were picked up and used extensively.) In private, some of the Vietnamese voice sentiments about peace, the happiness it would bring, and the horror of the air raids.

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[redacted] in spite of a deep longing for peace and considerable depression over economic difficulties and personal hardships, no one contemplated even for a moment trying to do anything against the will of the government. A fatalistic attitude, "as if the war were a flood or a hurricane to be survived," seemed to be quite common.

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Tighter Security: North Vietnam is tightening even further the already rigid security controls that grip the cities. The party daily, Nhan Dan, has called for greater efforts to keep the urban population in line and thus implies the regime is having some security problems. The article pointed out that watching for enemies of the state is not just the work of security police--all citizens were urged to lend a hand in spying on their neighbors to expose "espionage agents and counterrevolutionaries." This means anyone, in short, who might be expressing less than wholehearted enthusiasm for the war effort. There also was a strong hint in the article that a crackdown is coming on black marketers.

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French Left Raises Funds for Hanoi: Various Communist and leftist-oriented organizations in France have joined together in a project termed "Ship for Vietnam," designed to raise at least one half million dollars in goods and money to be shipped to North Vietnam. The French Communist Party has pledged to raise the lion's share of the amount with other groups contributing according to their means.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

US Being Made Ogre on Talks Issue: North Vietnam and its European bloc allies continue to stress the importance of Foreign Minister Trinh's offer of talks with the US in return for an end to the bombing. This propaganda is keyed to the theme that the US is rejecting peace overtures.

In an unusually detailed broadcast beamed in English to US servicemen in South Vietnam on 15 January, Hanoi reported both the national and international figures who have called upon the administration to respond to the Trinh statement. The broadcast listed Senators Robert Kennedy, McCarthy, Fulbright, and Cooper as leaders on the domestic scene demanding an end to the bombing, and quoted a number of editorials in leading US papers to that effect. Remarks by leaders of several NATO countries calling for an end to the air raids also were quoted.

Bloc comment has been generally cautious in treating Trinh's statement, but has been uniform in claiming that the US has failed to respond. A Hungarian broadcast on 15 January is typical. It claimed that Washington had given no sign of interest in negotiations and quoted recent remarks by US officials to demonstrate an uncompromising US position on settlement of the war. Like the Hanoi broadcast, that

from Budapest listed the NATO countries which have voiced support for a cessation of the bombing and noted remarks by Senator Mansfield.

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Hanoi Ballyhoos Deserters: Hanoi in an international broadcast on 16 January reported that three more "antiwar" American soldiers have sought political asylum in Sweden. The broadcast went on to wrap up previous reports on the 13 other recent defectors to Sweden and to report the protest at the Justice Department on 12 January.

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